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Global Cities, International Relations and the Fabrication of the World

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Biographical note

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Abstract

The global city presents one available model for understanding urbanization and associated hierarchies of power. In International Relations, the global city is treated as a unit in a new type of international system, an increasingly important actor in world politics, or a site through which global processes operate. This article forwards an alternative perspective. It treats the global city as a *dispositif* of power. While the global city captures the fact that power and wealth are spatially concentrated in today's urbanizing world politics, the concept also has a world-making capacity. The article analyses this capacity in two contexts: Firstly, it presents a genealogy of the voyage of the global cities concept from critical academic scholarship to a buzzword of city elites and business consultants. Secondly, it performs a governmental analysis of global city reports and indexes. Finally, the article suggests that conceptualizing the global city as a *dispositif* enables the important task of imagining alternative ways of framing the meaning of urbanization in world politics.

Keywords: global city, international relations, urbanization, governmentality, indicators

Introduction

The rapidly accelerating urbanization transforms the existing geographies of power and poses major challenges for the discipline of International Relations. Urbanization consists of a set of spatially grounded economic, demographic, technological and sociocultural processes, an outcome of which is the emergence of a network of spatially concentrated infrastructural configurations and human settlements. Keller Easterling suggests in her book *Extrastatecraft* that “some of the most radical changes to the globalizing world are being written, not in the language of law and diplomacy, but rather in the spatial information of infrastructure, architecture and urbanism”.¹ It is time for International Relations to start paying more attention to cities and urban dynamics. An engagement with global cities literature presents one way of doing this.

It has been argued that International Relations (IR) would have much to learn from the way in which the global city concept has been treated in sociology and geography, and that IR would have much to offer to discussions on global cities, notably on the political implications of the growing importance of cities.² Thus far, IR inquiries into global cities have mostly assumed that the rise in the global city talk signals either a significant change in the structural logic of the modern international structure or system, or the emergence of a new important political actor. This article contributes to this discussion by suggesting an additional perspective from which the dynamics of urbanization and the role of global cities in world politics and international relations can be examined. I suggest that the Foucauldian notion of *dispositif* offers a fruitful way of conceptualizing global cities in IR.

The conceptualization of the global city as a *dispositif* highlights that in addition to being an *imago mundi* – a term that stands for the centralization of world economy’s command and

control functions in a handful of major cities – the global city also functions as a *fabrica mundi*. The argument does not claim that the various phenomena described by global city scholars have not taken place or that the global city is a fictional entity. The notion of global cities captures the inescapable fact that power and wealth are spatially concentrated in today's urbanizing world politics. However, the notion also has a prescriptive, world-making capacity that current scholarship often misses. In addition to being a label for cities that possess network power, the global city is also a mechanism of power and as such, it plays a role in the fabrication of the world.³

In this article, I focus on the practices through which the global city has evolved from a descriptive to a prescriptive notion. Despite the criticism levied against the concept within the institutions of academic knowledge production,⁴ it has had powerful discursive effect in academic and policy circles. “To be a global city”, the management consultancy firm A.T. Kearney states in one of its reports, “is a splendid thing”.⁵ While Jennifer Robinson argues that global city theorization has developed into a form of “authoritative knowledge” playing a specific role within public discussion as a “regulating fiction”,⁶ Neil Brenner and Roger Keil claim that behind this there is a “mistaken identification of the colloquial notion of the global/world city with the scholarly concept developed in the [world/global city] literatures”.⁷ By contrast, I argue that the journey of the global city concept from a neo-Marxist concept to an *idée fixe* of city elites is not a misunderstanding that needs to be cleared up. Rather, it is something worth analyzing. A productive way to perform such an analysis is to approach the global city as a *dispositif* and to explore its genealogical and governmental dimensions.

I make the argument in four parts. In the first section of the paper, I describe the ways in which contemporary IR scholarship has responded to the “rise” of global cities. In the second section, I elaborate the idea of the global city as a *dispositif*. I then substantiate these claims with a brief genealogy of how the global city has evolved from an academic construct into a

buzzword, and how this has entailed the selective appropriation of academic global cities literature. The fourth part of my argument shows how the global city functions as a *dispositif* and governmental mechanism: I focus on a particular element of the global city imaginary – a set of influential global city reports and indexes. It is worth mentioning that while the focus here is on the reports and indexes, there are similar governmental and disciplinary mechanisms at play in various forums where global city formation is discussed.

Reception of the Global Cities Scholarship in International Relations

Over the past few years, IR scholars have started to argue that there is a need to develop ontological and epistemological bases to understand the role of global cities in world politics and international relations. Efforts to introduce global cities scholarship to IR audiences can be divided into roughly three main strands: The first strand argues that IR scholars should devote more attention to the rise of global cities as their emergence signals a transformation in the international system, which destabilizes many of the key assumptions of the discipline. The second suggests that the ascendance of a handful of cities to the position of global cities should prompt IR scholars to widen the basis for theorizing the role of sub-national actors in international relations and world politics. The third draws inspiration from relational spatial theorizing, assemblage thinking and the associated idea of multi-scalar politics.

The strand that focuses on *global cities as actors* in world politics claims that cities are taking on new roles within international relations and world politics.⁸ Acuto portrays cities as the “invisible gorillas of international studies”.⁹ Ljungkvist is interested in the ways in which cities and their local governments “act autonomously” or “make claims to political authority”.¹⁰ These contributions argue that the agency of cities within diplomatic and governance processes should be better recognized. This is said to result from the growing trend of urbanization, but in particular from the fact that a handful of cities, because of their

unique generative properties, are capable of wielding forms of network power.¹¹ The foregrounding of global cities as agents is often presented as a corrective to the IR discipline's "embedded statism" and the excessive presence of nation-states and inter-governmental relations in international relations.¹² The statism of the discipline is a problem due to the growing importance of cities in diplomatic affairs and international relations:

Thanks to this location at the crossroads of manifold worldwide processes, they are *playing an essential role* in the development of new governmental rationalities by adding to the complexity of the global landscape of political, economic, and cultural interactions and connecting micro (or local) political processes with macro (or global) trends and relations.¹³

There are efforts within this strand of theorisation to move beyond the act of merely highlighting the agency of the cities. This often means the examination of the cities' influence within wider structures of governance.¹⁴ Here, the status of a global city implies the *capacity* of a city to position itself in a strategic position within urban networks and to produce structures in the realms of global governance.¹⁵ Global cities are not only powerful but also provide public goods and facilitate private goods; they impact the global environment; organize and regulate worldwide, regional and national flows; possess capabilities for strategic governance and can also entertain representative and advocacy relations with other international entities.¹⁶ Alternatively, global cities can be conceptualized as cities that are "capable of constituting and organizing [urban] networks".¹⁷

This approach to global cities relies on a conception of power as a measurable phenomenon that determines the capacity of actors to realize their will. Arguably, the claim that cities are replacing states as key actors in international relations is underpinned by a somewhat reductionist understanding of agency. As Peter Marcuse reminds us, there is something

“perverse”¹⁸ to the practice of treating cities as actors. To discuss cities as actors – as entities that pursue policies, position themselves in strategic roles, or join transnational climate change networks, or cooperate or compete with each other – is to use a figure of speech.¹⁹ It obscures the fact that specific groups act in the name of a city. In this article, I show that the global city *dispositif* normalizes the idea of cities as unified actors pursuing policies and engaging in competition with other cities. Therefore, this is something that IR scholars should decode. Treating cities as actors implies a unity of purpose and a harmony of interests, which is usually lacking, and thus “obfuscates the conflicts, the clashes of interest, the disparate and diverse groups and viewpoints that characterize most urban communities”.²⁰

When examined from the perspective of *international systems*, however, the emergence of global cities as concentrations of wealth and power is argued to signal the re-emergence of system diversity. If the international system is understood as a “set of interacting units organised by a structure”,²¹ global cities can be thought to represent a new type of a unit. In this perspective, the rise of global cities indicates the decline of the modern state as the dominant organising principle of the international system. Simon Curtis emphasizes that when viewed from the perspective of the *longue durée*, the state-centric version of the international system with its structurally and functionally similar units appears a unique and short-run historical moment.²² If we accept the claim that global cities are a “qualitatively new urban form”,²³ that they signal the emergence of a new “spatial code”²⁴ and that we are, perhaps, living through an important moment of international change,²⁵ then we also need an explanation for and analysis of how such a transformation takes place. My argument is that examining the global city as a *dispositif* and detailing the ways in which it functions as a prescriptive, world-fabricating notion enables exactly this.

Recently, IR scholars have also tried to fit global cities into the framework of *relational spatial theorizing*. Acuto, for example, suggests that it would be productive to examine the

power and influence of global cities in world politics as a relational effect of their embeddedness in a multiplicity of power arrangements: “What agency [global cities] have is an emergent effect of their positioning in the geography of world politics”.²⁶ This implies the examination of the political space of the global system as a process, as a “set of political, economic and social structures in the making”.²⁷ Curtis, in his discussion of the role of agency in systems transformation, links the weakening of the modern state and the rise of other units to the “neo-liberal project” and its strategicities. Thus, “the global city ... fulfils the requirement for command and control nodes within a decentralised global economy, but also brings with its emergence a site and space containing new potentialities for political and social transformation”.²⁸

Curtis has also cautioned that the global cities literature may replicate an essentialist view of units and agency, or commit the error of methodological structuralism. He convincingly argues that we need a processual conceptualization of global cities – a conceptualization, which does not reify units but focuses on processes, social transactions and relations during which certain units historically solidify. Curtis suggests that global cities should not be examined from the point of view of subjective notions of agency, but rather they should be treated as instantiations of a multiplicity of processes of becoming.²⁹ Furthermore, he brings in the literature on assemblages to his inquiry into global cities: “Global cities are the local sites through which many of the processes that construct global space operate, and through which transterritorial capabilities are produced”.³⁰ In a similar vein, Acuto has suggested “understanding the global city as an assemblage of multiple registers of authority, complexity and globality”.³¹

Relational spatial theories, assemblages and *dispositif* analyses are all attempts to think about heterogeneous arrangements, and thus avoid assumptions of fixity and boundedness. They yield a multi-scalar image of political processes, which replaces the idea that social and

political life can be made sense of along levels-of-analysis.³² However, there are also differences between assemblage and *dispositif* thinking. Paul Rabinow suggests that temporality is one among these. While assemblages are an “experimental matrix of heterogeneous materials”, *dispositifs* are relatively stable, and yet have shown adaptability to various social purposes.³³ Examining the global city as a *dispositif* highlights how its world-making capacity – a capacity to fabricate the world in its own image – is an outcome of the selective appropriation of stabilized elements for hegemonic social purposes. The following section details this argument.

The Global City as *Dispositif*

Approaching the global city as a *dispositif* offers an alternative to the existing IR analyses of global cities. There are commonalities – in particular with the assemblage approach – but also significant differences. While the approaches discussed above define the global city as an actor, site or unit within a system, here it is defined as a specific kind of apparatus of power consisting of various kinds of elements – discursive as well as material. In Michel Foucault’s definition, a *dispositif* consists of “discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic positions”.³⁴ The point is to highlight that the study of discourses is not sufficient for an analysis of power relations. What needs to be examined is the intersection of discourses with various heterogeneous elements.³⁵

A *dispositif* can be mediated by a variety of substitutable agents who evaluate and discipline others, as well as themselves, with reference to it.³⁶ Interestingly, individual agents may also play substitutable roles within a *dispositif*. For example, while Saskia Sassen’s and Peter Taylor’s global city theorization can be characterized as a neo-Marxist criticism of the concentration of command and control functions into global cities,³⁷ as a scientific advisors

and contributors, they have also been important players in the production and legitimation of consultant companies' global city reports, which treat global citydom as a desirable status.³⁸

As a *dispositif* emerges through the actions of a multitude of agents – such as academic scholars or consultants – it is multivocal and often incoherent. Although its various elements do not always operate in concert, there is a system of relations between the various elements.³⁹ Further, this system coheres just enough to become identifiable as a project and achieve its overall effects.⁴⁰

Secondly, a *dispositif* – such as that of the global city – circulates globally. The word global is here understood to refer to an element with “a distinctive capacity for decontextualization and recontextualization, abstractability and movement, across diverse social and cultural situations and spheres of life”.⁴¹ It is not an all-encompassing universal. In this article, the global city *dispositif*'s capacity for recontextualization is illustrated with a brief genealogy that traces the voyage of the global city concept from a neo-Marxist notion to a consultancy buzzword. This involves paying attention to the fact that while reports and indices designed in locations such as London, Brisbane or Tokyo give positivity to the term global city, the notion may be reconfigured selectively, as it is deployed in diverse political projects and social norms at various locations.

Thirdly, the *dispositif* is strategic: in a given historical moment, its heterogeneous elements are organized so as to meet “an urgent need”⁴² and normalize specific kinds of social relations and subjectivities. Foucault's example here is the assimilation of a floating population, which was becoming burdensome for a mercantilist economy.⁴³ An analysis should thus attempt to recognise the strategic imperative of a *dispositif* and the types of social relations that it strives to normalize.⁴⁴ However, a *dispositif* is not determined: Its elements can re-arrange themselves to provide answers to unexpected questions. The voyage of the global city concept from critical geography to the network of consultants and urban elites illustrates exactly this.

But conceptualising the global city as a *dispositif* is fruitful also because it also enables the identification of cracks in the *dispositif* and shows how it could be directed toward alternative sociospatial imaginations.

A fourth feature of the *dispositif* concerns the sense in which it constitutes a form of power that Foucault elsewhere discusses as governmentality.⁴⁵ Governmentality is a broad notion. It draws attention to the general idea that power is not only repressive but also productive, as well as to the wide variety of control techniques and forms of knowledge that inform and shape the practices of governing. For the latter task, the analytics of governmentality offers a toolbox – a set of conceptual distinctions – to understand the workings of power as a practical activity that can be detailed at the level of the techniques, mechanisms and subjectivities.⁴⁶ In the empirical section of this article, I detail some governmental techniques that have bestowed the global city its prescriptive, world-making capacity.

From an Analytical Construct to a Buzzword

This section presents a brief genealogy of the global city. Employing a genealogical perspective enables the examination of beliefs and truth-claims in their historical context.⁴⁷

As I take global city scholarship to be part of the *dispositif*, it is my task here to trace the voyage of the global city as a concept from an academic construct to a buzzword and a governmental mechanism. How did it come about that the notion of a global city, which was originally an analytical notion developed to pose questions about urbanization processes across the globe, is now commonly understood as status to which cities should aspire? How has the global city developed into an authoritative image of city success?

Firstly, I argue that the concept of polarization, which was a central element in the world and global cities literature, has become less pronounced – if not completely silenced – in the popularized versions of the global city. This “forgetting” has been a significant element in the

evolution of the concept into an image of city success. Secondly, I draw attention to another kind of selective appropriation of the global cities literature. For example, the idea of inter-city relations as competitive – as opposed to cooperative – has been treated critically in academic literature. Yet, the popularized versions continue to draw heavily on the idea of competitive angst between the cities of the world – presumably for the reason that it enhances the concept’s governmental capacity and aspirational appeal.

The notion of the world/global city goes back to the first couple of decades of the 20th century and the Chicago School sociologists who focused on cities as a unique social milieu. Writing in 1938, Louis Wirth argued that “urbanization of the world”⁴⁸ is one of the most impressive features of modern life. He suggested that cities should be understood as “the initiating and controlling center of economic, political, and cultural life” and that these centres are unique for the reason that they are not only material or administrative structures but “draw the most remote parts of the world into [their] orbit.”⁴⁹ A landmark text entitled *The World Cities* by Peter Hall was published in 1966. It defines certain cities as centres of mobility, political power, culture and talent.⁵⁰ In it – as well as in other founding works of the world cities literature – the world city is conceptualized as a status, which stems from the possession of certain internal attributes. The term was firmly attached to the modern national imaginary: world cities were understood to be the centres of the world’s most important nations.⁵¹

In the 1980s, the world cities research programme started to focus on macrosociological or -geographical changes behind the central status of a handful of cities (such as Tokyo, Paris, and New York). The focus of these mostly neo-Marxist analyses shifted from the internal attributes of a certain set of cities to the new division of labour and its spatial organization. The world-scale prominence of a limited number of cities began to be examined in the context of power hierarchies created by capitalism, such as unequal exchange and core-periphery dynamics. Unlike previously, world cities or global cities were not conceptualized as centres

of significant nation-states but as central places in the global division of labour and dynamics of capital accumulation.

An influential outcome of these discussions was John Friedman's world city hypothesis.

According to it, world cities are the locations which global capital uses as "basing points in the spatial organization and articulation of production".⁵² Friedman's world city hypothesis is an attempt to systematize the study of world cities through an inquiry into how cities can be arranged in a hierarchical order based on their position in the spatialization of the world economy. The more indispensable a city was considered to be for the operations of global capital, the higher it was placed in the dynamic hierarchy. Friedman's vision of world politics introduced the idea of organizing world cities into a hierarchy and suggested that a "competitive *angst*" prompts cities to compete to "capture ever more command and control functions".⁵³ Both of these principles have received critical treatment in recent research literature on global cities.⁵⁴ However, from the point of view of a *dispositif* analysis it is worth recognizing that the global city reports, indexes, as well as media discussions generally, continue to appeal to the competitive assumption in their discussion of global cities.

The term global city was made famous by Saskia Sassen in a similarly entitled landmark work, originally published in 1991 and dedicated to a double dynamism in the spatial organization of global capitalism. In Sassen's analysis, global cities form part of the infrastructure for economic globalization. At the same time as economic activity was becoming more dispersed around the world, its "command and control functions" seemed to concentrate in a handful of locations – in global cities.⁵⁵ Sassen argues that the materialization of the global economy in global cities is a function of the rise of the multinational corporation, changes in the international division of labour, and technological advances. Over the past few decades, these developments have led to the unbundling of modern territoriality

and the rescaling of national territorial systems. Therefore, she conceptualizes global cities as a functional by-product of the structural transformations of capitalism.

It is important to recognize that for Sassen – as well as for most scholars representing this research tradition – the global city is a critical concept.⁵⁶ It stands for economic growth and rising salaries, but also for social polarization, segregation, shrinking middle classes, slum production, gated communities, and so on. The structure of employment and the labour market of cities where control-and-command functions of global capitalism concentrate has some characteristic features. Firstly, in comparison to manufacturing, the service sector is polarized with a larger number of highly paid workers at the top. Secondly, the high-wage groups of global cities create a demand for low-wage service labour. Thirdly, Sassen argues that the manufacturing sector of global cities not only declines but also downgrades, which further polarizes the earnings between the high pay and low pay groups of global cities.⁵⁷

The genealogy of the global city concept shows that the idea of hierarchical and competitive city relations forms part of the original, neo-Marxist global city scholarship. So does the idea that behind this hierarchy there is a model of wealth creation, which tends to reward a minority of citizens to the detriment of others.⁵⁸ Yet, this is not a situation that the global city scholars are happy to note. By contrast, the “purpose of the identification of a hierarchy of world cities in the world economy with regard to the function of command and control by neo-Marxist authors ... is to identify and critique the concentration of power and wealth in and across those cities”.⁵⁹

Thus, being a global city may not be such a “splendid thing” as one can be led to believe. Yet, the aspirational ethos, which now seems to form an inseparable part of the concept, has effectively overshadowed the concern of the original global city literature over the uneven concentration of wealth and power across cities,⁶⁰ and over the fact that the dynamism and

prosperity associated with global cities also creates “black holes” of poverty and disconnection.⁶¹ This is not a matter of a mistaken identification between the colloquial and scholarly global city concepts, but of selective appropriation. The global city concept has been adapted to the agendas of “territorial competitiveness”, “entrepreneurial cities” and “competition states”. Some elements – such as the assumption of competitive angst – have been retained, while other elements have been strategically forgotten. Selectively appropriated, the notion normalizes and legitimizes the idea of urban competition, which revolves around the idea that subnational units have no choice but to compete with one another for economic survival and for transnationally footloose capital investments.⁶² The governmental techniques through which such normalization occurs are analysed in the following section.

Governing through Global City Indexes

In the previous section, I argued that the global city concept has been selectively appropriated to legitimize and normalize the idea of territorial competition, which rests upon a problematic analogy of capitalist business companies and subnational territorial units.⁶³ Still, as Peter Taylor argues, a typical question posed by city representatives to global city experts is how to succeed in the competitive game, climb up the hierarchy of globality and become a “bona fide global city”.⁶⁴ The fact that attaining the status of being a global city has become such a popular indulgence among urban elites cannot be simply attributed to incompetence and the intellectual carelessness of its proponents. Rather, specific mechanisms of power normalize the aspirational appeal of the notion of the global city, and these mechanisms need to be analysed. In this section, my focus is on one such mechanism: a set of global cities reports and indexes.

The first attempt to create an index of global cities is the report published by the Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) network at the University of Loughborough in 1998. Since then, consultants, media outlets, NGOs, international and national state agencies have started to develop benchmarks, metrics, rankings and indexes that attempt to position cities within a global frame.⁶⁵ The number of reports has grown to an extent that it now seems fair to talk about a “city index industry” which – despite differences in analytical methods – is held together by the practice of classifying cities.⁶⁶

The GaWC report notwithstanding, the first issues of today’s most influential reports were published in the aftermath of the 2007–2008 financial crisis and are now produced in large numbers by consulting firms, think tanks, chambers of commerce, universities, and the media. In this article, I focus on the governmental role of a set of influential comprehensive global city indicators, i.e. A. T. Kearney’s *Global Cities Index*, Economist Intelligence Unit’s *The 2025 Global City Competitiveness Index (or Hot Spots 2025)*, Mori Memorial Foundation’s *Global Power Cities Index*, Price Waterhouse Cooper’s *Cities of Opportunity*, as well as Knight Frank’s *Wealth Report*. The indexes and reports have become a “booming cottage industry”⁶⁷ for consulting firms and think tanks. Additionally, the competitive understanding of the global city that they advance also has had substantial influence in public discourse, as illustrated by the way in which their results are discussed in the Finnish and Japanese media:

Cities can be roughly divided into three groups on the basis of international rankings. New York, London and Tokyo are mega class superglobal cities. Cities and city-states such as San Francisco, Singapore and Dubai are on level two. On the lowest level, there may sometimes also loom capital cities of the Nordic states. If we strive really hard, Helsinki, Stockholm and Copenhagen can be on the third or fourth level of the hierarchy of global cities.⁶⁸

Since the first edition of the GPCI in 2008, Tokyo has almost always been in fourth place after New York, London and Paris. Ichikawa said Tokyo should not be happy with being No. 4.⁶⁹

As the idea of the *dispositif* as a globally circulating mechanism suggests, the rankings are now a standard part of public discourse in various parts of the world. Their aspirational tone, often communicated through numbers, is easily picked up, not only by the media but also by policymakers. In one of its publications, the Moscow city government tells the reader that “on the dimension of intellectual capital and innovations Moscow is in the 17th place out of 26, after Hong Kong, Singapore and Madrid”.⁷⁰

While this article focuses on the governmental techniques of the rankings and ratings, further research should explore in more detail the paths through which the reports and their rankings play in the policymaking processes.⁷¹ Doing this would enable moving beyond the state/non-state or public/private dichotomy in attempts to conceptualize agency in international relations and world politics, which is something that Harriet Bulkeley and Heike Schroeder stress in their analysis of global cities and the governance of climate change.⁷²

In the rest of this section, I elaborate how the global city *dispositif* functions as a mechanism of productive power. I focus upon three mechanisms: naming, evaluation and subjectification. Through my inquiry, I illustrate the role that the reports and indexes have played in turning a selectively framed understanding of global cities into an image of city success. I show that the reports are aspirational, normalizing and disciplinary: they highlight features that cities should exhibit, point out absences that are defined as problematic, and prompt their objects of evaluation to conform to a preconceived model.

Assigning Names and Labels

Naming and labelling is a specific act of power. It brings order to the abundance of information and orders experiences. According to Dale Spender, naming “is the means whereby we attempt to order and structure the chaos and flux of existence which would otherwise be an undifferentiated mass. By assigning names we impose ... a meaning which allows us to manipulate the world”.⁷³ The global city reports and indexes do exactly that, they place cities in class rankings and identify these ranks with names and codes. For example, the GaWC report divides the examined cities into three classes – alpha, beta and gamma – and further into three or four subclasses (e.g. beta+, beta, beta-). The *Global Financial Centres Index* classifies the cities as “global”, “transnational” and “local”. Some reports simply place the cities in a numerical hierarchical order based on an assessment of their “globality”.⁷⁴

The act of naming enables the reports and indexes to treat global citydom as something that is quite unproblematically knowable. Naming and labelling bypasses the fact that the discussion is conducted in metaphorical terms, that the term global city and its derivatives – as used in the reports – conceals a whole set of controversial assumptions.⁷⁵ Moreover, the reports rely on the language of science and use adjectives such as “objective”, “impartial” and “detailed” to enforce the idea that they have the authority to designate certain cities as global cities.⁷⁶

The reports are said to be based on extensive research and large data sets making them transparent and comparable. Yet, they function like a spotlight that sheds light on some features in the object of evaluation and, as such, conceal other aspects.

Feminist scholars have long recognized that the power of naming goes hand-in-hand with questions of visibility and invisibility.⁷⁷ Naming is often put forward as a way to combat invisibility; however, naming, and its associated techniques of examination, can also be a way of forcing visibility, which renders it a disciplinary mechanism. In fact, Foucault called visibility a trap.⁷⁸ Those who are seen begin to control themselves so as to behave and thus conform to the will of the system. Similarly, the global city reports – a form of “paper

panopticon”⁷⁹ – establish a visibility over cities, a visibility used to differentiate and judge them.⁸⁰ In addition, internet tools are available on the report producers’ websites, which enables the user to make customised comparisons of cities. For example, the consultant company PwC offers the *Model Your City* tool, which enables anyone to compare 27 cities using 60 variables.⁸¹ Report and indexes are thus a form of power that does not deploy signs of sovereignty, but objectifies those on whom it is exercised, by way of creating a body of knowledge about them.⁸²

The reports try to establish the impression that assigning the status of a global city to certain cities is the outcome of an objective and transparent process. However, the code names of global city reports – alphas and betas, rising stars and black holes – are ciphers that mask as much as they reveal. Examining the indicators behind code names and the weightings behind hierarchies, one soon learns that they are framed in a specific way. The analyzed global city reports display a broad variety of indicators. A.T. Kearney index employs 26 indicators in five categories: human capital, business activity, information exchange, cultural experience, and political engagement. The Economist Intelligence Unit uses 32 indicators – 27 qualitative and 5 quantitative – which it groups into eight categories. Mori’s 70 indicators are grouped into six categories such as economy and R&D, academic muscle, and livability – with little mention of political engagement. PwC’s 56 indicators in 10 categories cover quite similar ground while glossing over politics.

Despite certain differences between the rankings, in all of them a city’s ability to score points depends primarily on its usefulness for finance capital. All the examined comprehensive rankings treat a well-functioning finance sector as a compulsory element of being a global city. As its name suggests, the Z/Yen Group’s Global Financial Centres Index makes that its only criteria and excludes cities that are not recognized financial centres. Other reports also lean heavily on finance and commerce in their weightings. In the Economist Intelligence

Unit's global city report, "economic strength" is weighted 30 percent. Fifteen percent is assigned both to "institutional effectiveness" and "human capital". "Physical capital", "financial maturity", and "global appeal" are ten percent each. "Social and cultural character" – an indicator standing for freedom of expression and human rights, diversity, cultural vibrancy and crime rates – is only worth five percentage points as is "environmental and natural hazards", i.e. the quality of environmental governance and risk of natural disasters.⁸³

While urbanization stands for a variety of spatially grounded economic, demographic, technological and sociocultural processes, it is framed in quite specific ways in the global city reports. One of the grounds given for the epochal claim that cities are surpassing states in importance is a specific aspect of urbanization – that a larger portion of the world's wealth is produced in cities than is their share of world population.⁸⁴ As one of the reports notes, "well over half of the world's population lives in cities, generating more than 80% of global GDP. Standard population projections show that virtually all global growth over the next 30 years will be in urban areas".⁸⁵ The unevenness of urbanization related development is thus recognized and normalized – not problematized. Moreover, the reports strategically forget to mention the fact that cities generate not only a major share of the global GDP but also 70% of greenhouse emissions and 70% of global waste.⁸⁶

Yet, societal models that do not seem to offer opportunities for profit making are exoticized in the reports. Sao Paulo's good results in adult literacy, classroom size and libraries – its "commitment to enhancing intellectual capital" – is argued to be inconsistent with the fact that its showings in entrepreneurial environment and the Innovation Cities Index are poor: "It is difficult to reconcile the city's first place in university research with its median rank in protection of intellectual property, let alone with its sixth place in innovation".⁸⁷ While it is possible to highlight a number of different understandings of what it means to be a global city or to pay attention to various aspects of urbanization, the economism of global city indicators

enforces the role of businesses in defining globality: “Business leaders must be a driving force to create a vision for a global city”.⁸⁸ This example illustrates the fact that the reports seek to naturalize the assumption that cities are homogeneous actors climbing up the hierarchy of globality – but that in practice, such ascendance in status often means meeting the needs of the globally involved and economically prosperous.

Motivating Competition

Incompetence and intellectual sloppiness does not explain the fact that urban elites around the world try to attain the status of being a global city. Instead, certain governmental and disciplinary mechanisms motivate city representatives to engage in the competitive game. The reports present comparisons as an opportunity for the cities to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and become inspired to renew and develop themselves.⁸⁹ Constant change is argued to be a key to success as a global city: “the continuing spirit of planning, building, breaking and rebuilding remains a keystone of Chicago’s success”.⁹⁰ Or,

today more than ever, global cities need to run just to stand still. Urban leaders that wish to provide their citizens with the benefits of becoming a global powerhouse must fire on all five cylinders (business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience, and political engagement) all the time.⁹¹

This resonates with Wendy Larner and Richard Le Heron’s argument that the comparing and benchmarking is a characteristic feature of contemporary economic and social life. Such “treadmills of incessant learning and feedback” are expected to “encourage places and people to constantly reinvent themselves and remobilise their efforts, bringing new economic spaces and subjects into being”.⁹² As in any attempt to motivate through comparisons, penalties and rewards are also involved. On the pages of global city reports, specific code function as marks

of honour and disgrace, as do numerical rankings, or references to “leaders and laggards”.⁹³

An improved position in rankings and league tables may be regarded as a reward as such, and a fall in rankings as a penalty.⁹⁴ Hierarchical individuation is one way of motivating competition, and global city reports also often place their objects of evaluation in hierarchical arrangements, such as league table rankings. Topographical metaphors – the language of peaks and valleys – provide another characteristic way for the reports to enforce the idea that the name and status of the global city is something to strive for:

In this sense, the world is not flat. Instead, it is a landscape of peaks and valleys, and global cities are the peaks. Often, they soar above the hinterland around them, having more to do with each other than with their own countrymen in the valleys below. From their summits, global citizens talk to each other and do the world’s business.⁹⁵

Through comparison, hierarchization and gratification, the global city reports thus normalize the idea that cities are actors that must strive to attain the status of global city – and that this necessitates engaging in competition with other cities. As one of the reports states,

“competition with other cities, whether for a new factory or new museum, is a fact of life”.⁹⁶

A characteristic way of enforcing the competitive dynamism is to cultivate the fear of the hunted. This takes place, for example, by representing the capital cities of the so-called emerging economies as challengers of the established global cities, as “rising stars” and “knockers at the door”.⁹⁷ Or by suggesting that the major cities of India, Brazil and Russia “are expected to catch up to many cities in the developed world”.⁹⁸

According to the UN’s *World Urbanization Prospects*, 66% of the world’s population will be urban dwellers by 2050.⁹⁹ Given this, the UN encourages cities to generate better income and employment opportunities, expand water and sanitation infrastructure, ensure equal access to

services and reduce the number of people living in slums.¹⁰⁰ Urbanization is also one of the elements of the global city *dispositif*. Yet, the analysed materials easily raise the image of the global city as a one-dimensional city: “what is good for any part of the city is good for all within it, and the part in question is almost always the globally involved or economically prosperous part”.¹⁰¹ At the policy level, the global city *dispositif* thus legitimizes interventions aimed at creating smooth conditions for the circulation of goods, services and capital.¹⁰² Skyscrapers illustrate this point well. Communicating economic power and status, the image of supertall skylines seems to be an inescapable part of any global city. In addition, “skyscraper construction activity” is also something that a city can get points for.¹⁰³ *Knight Frank 2015 Global Cities* report contains a specific skyscraper index, which rewards cities not only for the construction rate of skyscrapers, but also for the “capital values on the premium upper floors”¹⁰⁴ of these buildings. As the report emphasizes, skyscrapers are an indicator of being a global city since they allow the conversion of air into “land”, and thus into a profit-making opportunity.¹⁰⁵

Forms of Subjectivity and Social Relations

There are close linkages between forms of power and processes of subjectification, as captured in Foucault’s famous definition of government as “conduct of conducts”.¹⁰⁶ The global city apparatus is also productive of specific kinds of subjects and social relations. The sovereign figure of the reports is the representative of globally footloose capital – an investor or a representative of a multinational corporation.¹⁰⁷ The reports are structured according to the motivations and needs of these people, people with surplus capital. If we look for an explanation for why the Economist Intelligence Unit report, for example, weights its indicators exactly the way it does, we are told that “investors follow sizeable and growing markets”.¹⁰⁸ Investors are characterised as actors only concerned with deciding where to put their money¹⁰⁹ and the reports as a reliable and easily accessible body of information for such

decision-making. The A.T. Kearney *Global Cities Index*, for example, claims that it constitutes a preferred source of information for businesses contemplating where to locate regional headquarters, expand operations or find the best talent.¹¹⁰

Another noteworthy feature of the analysed global city reports is that the status of a global city is argued to necessitate a specific kind of population. The reports emphasise “intellectual capital”, which is defined, for example, in terms of mathematics and science skills, literacy and the level of education.¹¹¹ The reports treat global cities as “talent magnets”¹¹² and also measure which cities actually host such talent: they rate cities according to the size of foreign-born population, the level of education of the population, international schools, top universities and international student population.¹¹³ State and city governments are tasked to “lure the men and women who make up the human capital that is the modern urban economy’s most precious commodity”.¹¹⁴ At the same time, the reports remain silent about other kinds of identities; efforts to respond to the needs of wider populations do not form part of their rewarding dynamism.

The components of the public sector – representatives of cities and states – play the role of objects of evaluation in the reports. Their actions are argued to be decisive in avoiding the marginalisation and impoverishment of cities and in the pursuit of policies capable of attracting attention of investors and, ultimately, for their money. The reports rely on and reproduce the neoliberal script that sees the state and the public sector as a limited but efficient actor, which creates the conditions for the market mechanism and competition to function. They encourage the public sector to make investments in infrastructure, speedy network connections and broadband technology in particular: “high-speed access to information can make the difference between failure and success”.¹¹⁵ It is through this kind of competitive dynamism that the global city *dispositif* scripts cities as competitive actors,

enforces specific kinds of subjectivities and social relations, and thus fabricates a world that it claims already exists.

Conclusions

This article has proposed an alternative to the existing International Relations conceptualizations of global cities. Previous contributions suggest either viewing the global city as a new type of an actor in international and world politics, a unit of a transforming international system, or a site through which global assemblages operate. I have argued that treating global cities as actors is problematic for the reason that it obfuscates the politics – the clashes of interest – that characterize most urban communities. As for the claim that the global city is an indicator of a transformation of the international system and that we are thus living through an important moment of international change, what is often lacking in the literature is the articulation of how such a transformation is taking place. My argument is that the global city should be examined as a *dispositif* of power as this enables the appreciation of the fact that it also takes part in the fabrication of the world it describes.

This argument was made in two parts. Firstly, a genealogy of the global city showed that the concept emerged within an academic discussion on the problems of uneven economic development, but has since been popularized. It also demonstrated that while the concept has become popularized, it has been selectively appropriated. While the global city was initially a critical concept, it is now treated as a desirable status to obtain and as an indicator of success. I argued that this selective appropriation is not a matter of a mistaken identification between the colloquial and scholarly global city concepts, but rather reflects the strategic character of the *dispositif*. It echoes attempts to fit the global city concept into the agendas of territorial competitiveness, entrepreneurial cities and competition states. Some elements of the neo-

Marxist global city scholarship have been retained, while others have been purposefully forgotten.

Secondly, I detailed some governmental techniques that bestow the global city its aspirational appeal and prescriptive, world-making capacity. I focused on the techniques of naming and labelling, motivating competition through hierarchies and enforcing subjectivities and social relations. This enabled me to show how the global city *dispositif* fabricates the world. It normalizes a specific understanding of contemporary urbanization and social relations, and may also legitimize the materialization of cities into a specific form. The competitive appeal encourages state and city governments to support the kinds of policies and infrastructure thought necessary to maintain or improve the city's standing within the network of global cities, but that in practice usually benefit the globally involved and economically prosperous.

Thus, the voyage of the global city concept from critical geography to a consultant buzzword is not to be written off as an outcome of intellectual carelessness. Rather, the coordinates for the travel are provided by the key characteristics of a *dispositif*: its emergence through the actions of a multitude of agents, capacity for decontextualization and recontextualization, resonance with the strategic needs of an epoch, and governmental capacity. This also highlights that the rise of global cities is not inevitable. It presents one available model for making sense of the contemporary processes of urbanization.

A *dispositif* is a mechanism of power, but there are cracks and fractures in it. Due to this, it can be (re)directed towards alternative projects, towards different ways of fabricating the world. Arguably, conceptualizing the global city as a *dispositif* also enables the identification of a range of alternative imaginaries. Articulations of such projects are available. They can be found, for example, in attempts to foreground such sociocultural and socio-political dimensions that mainstream analyses, city elites and armies of consultants tend to ignore.

These would include radical grassroots movements, gendered spaces, informal networks of immigrant “others”, footprints and memories, a city’s world of sounds...¹¹⁶ Efforts to reimagine the emerging urban world order may also draw inspiration from the (Lefebvrian) idea of the “right to the global city”,¹¹⁷ which already shapes the way in which urbanization is framed, for example, in the United Nation’s New Urban Agenda.¹¹⁸ A different understanding is also present in analyses that show how “ordinary cities” are complexly embedded in global-relational contexts.¹¹⁹ These examples remind us that while an engagement of International Relations scholars with the dynamics of urbanization through the global city concept is certainly welcome, the concept has to be treated critically and the search for alternative formulations of the role of cities and urbanization in world politics should continue.

¹ Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (London: Verso, 2014), p. 15.

² See e.g. Michele Acuto, “Global Cities: Gorillas in Our Midst”, *Alternatives*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (2010); Michele Acuto, *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy* (London: Routledge, 2013); Mark Amen, Noah J. Toly, Patricia L. McCarney & Klaus Segbers (eds.) *Cities and Global Governance: New Sites for International Relations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011); Simon Curtis, “Global Cities and the Transformation of the International System”, *Review of International Studies* Vol. 37, No. 4 (2011); Simon Curtis (ed.) *The Power of Cities in International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2014); Simon Curtis, *Global Cities and Global Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

³ On the notion of fabrication of the world, see also Sandro Mezzarda and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, Or, the Multiplication of Labour* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), p. 30. See also Jennifer Robinson, *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 104–107, 111.

⁴ On the one hand, the criticism has targeted the empirical basis of claims according to which global cities are significantly different from other major centres in terms of their composition of economic activity or social conditions. On the other hand, it has been argued that the notion opens a fundamentally limited window into global urbanization processes. See e.g. Jennifer Robinson, “Global and World Cities: A View from off the Map”, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* Vol. 26, No. 3 (2002), p. 97, 112.

⁵ A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index 2010*, p. 1.

⁶ Jennifer Robinson, “Global and World Cities”, p. 545.

⁷ Neil Brenner & Roger Keil, “From Global Cities to Globalized Urbanization”, *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*, Vol. 3 (2014), p. 16.

⁸ Michele Acuto, *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy*; Kristin Ljungkvist, “The Global City: From Strategic Site to a Global Actor”, in Simon Curtis (ed.) *The Power of Cities in International Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁹ Michele Acuto, *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy*, p. 2–3.

¹⁰ Kristin Ljungkvist, *The Global City 2.0: From Strategic Site to Global Actor* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 1–3.

¹¹ Sofie Bouteligier, *Cities, Networks, and Global Environmental Governance: Spaces of Innovation, Places of Leadership* (London: Routledge, 2012).

¹² Michele Acuto, “Global Cities: Gorillas in Our Midst”, p. 426; Michele Acuto, *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy*, p. 2.

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- ¹³ Michele Acuto, "Global Cities: Gorillas in Our Midst", p. 427; emphasis added.
- ¹⁴ See esp. Michel Acuto, *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy*.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Michele Acuto, "Global Cities: Gorillas in Our Midst", p. 430.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., p. 438.
- ¹⁸ Peter Marcuse, "The City' as Perverse Metaphor", *City*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 247–254.
- ¹⁹ On the synecdochal usage of the concept of a global city, see also Doreen Massey, *World City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p. 41 and Ash Amin & Stephen Graham "The Ordinary City", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 411–429; Peter Marcuse, "The city' as Perverse Metaphor", p. 252.
- ²⁰ Peter Marcuse, "The city' as perverse metaphor", p. 248, 252. See also David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism", *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, Vol. 71, No. 1, p. 5.
- ²¹ Simon Curtis, "Global cities and the Transformation of the International System", p. 1935.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid., p. 1945.
- ²⁴ Curtis's reference here is to Henri Lefebvre's discussion of spatial codes in *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
- ²⁵ Simon Curtis, *Global Cities and Global Order*, p. 5.
- ²⁶ Michel Acuto, *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy*, p. 11.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 23.
- ²⁸ Simon Curtis, "Global cities and the Transformation of the International System", p. 1937.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid., p. 1938.
- ³¹ Michele Acuto, "Dubai in the 'middle'", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* Vol. 38, No. 5 (2014), p. 1733.
- ³² Cf. Michele Acuto, *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy*, p. 3.
- ³³ Paul Rabinow, *Anthropos Today: Reflections on Modern Equipment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 56; William Walters, *Governmentality: Critical Encounters* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 77.
- ³⁴ Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh", in Colin Gordon (ed.) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 184.
- ³⁵ William Walters, *Governmentality: Critical Encounters*, p. 76–77.
- ³⁶ Ivan Manokha "Foucault's Concept of Power and the Global Discourse of Human Rights", *Global Society* Vol. 23, No. 4 (2009), pp. 429–452.
- ³⁷ E.g. Richard G. Smith, "The Ordinary City Trap", *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 45, pp. 2290–2304.
- ³⁸ Saskia Sassen, "Beyond State to State Geopolitics", in A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index 2012*; Peter Taylor, "Relational City Thinking", in A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index 2012*; Saskia Sassen, "Urban Legends", *Fresh Perspectives from Dubai, Issue 15* (2014), pp. 22–25, available at <http://vision.ae/focus/global_cities>, retrieved 16 June 2015. See also Scott Leff and Brittany Petersen, *Beyond the Scorecard: Understanding Global City Rankings*, (Chicago: Chicago Council on Global Affairs), p. 3.
- ³⁹ Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh", p. 194.
- ⁴⁰ Morgan Brigg, "Empowering NGOs: The Microcredit Movement through Foucault's Notion of Dispositif", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* Vol. 26, No. 3 (2001), p. 237.
- ⁴¹ Aihwa Ong & Stephen J. Collier, "Global Assemblages, Anthropological Problems", in Stephen J. Collier and Aihwa Ong (eds.) *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), p. 15.
- ⁴² Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh", p. 195.
- ⁴³ Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh", p. 195.
- ⁴⁴ Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh", p. 195; Ngai-Ling Sum & Bob Jessop, *Towards a Cultural Political Economy* (Cheltenham: Edgar Elgar, 2013), p. 51–52.
- ⁴⁵ E.g. Michel Foucault, "Governmentality", in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon & Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 87–104.
- ⁴⁶ William Walters, *Governmentality: Critical Encounters*, p. 45.
- ⁴⁷ See e.g. Mark Bevir, "Rethinking Governmentality: Towards Genealogies of Governance", *European Journal of Social Theory* Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 423–441.
- ⁴⁸ Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life", *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 44, No. 1, p. 1.
- ⁴⁹ Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life", p. 2.
- ⁵⁰ Peter Hall, *The World Cities* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966).

- ⁵¹ Neil Brenner and Roger Keil, *The Global City Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 20.
- ⁵² John Friedman, "The World City Hypothesis", *Development and Change* Vol. 17, No. 1 (1986), pp. 320–321.
- ⁵³ John Friedman, "Where We Stand: a Decade of World City Research", p. 23.
- ⁵⁴ E.g. Paul L. Knox, "Globalization and World City Formation", in S.G.E. Gravesteijn, S. van Griensven and M.C. de Smidt (eds.) *Timing Global Cities* (Netherlands Geographical Studies, 1998), p. 26–27. Peter Taylor, "On City Cooperation and City Competition", in *International Handbook of Globalization and World Cities* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011). Literature on global cities is also being criticized for the reason that the hierarchies of global cities are difficult to test empirically. The available data is mostly derived from the measures of city attributes, and it does not reveal much of the interdependencies that are supposed to go to the heart of the assumption that global cities are a basing point for the operations of transnational capitalism (see e.g. John Short, Yeong-Hyun Kim, Merje Kuus & H. Wells, "The Dirty Little Secret of World Cities Research", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* Vol. 20, No. 4 (1996), 697–717). Another common point of criticism concerns the fact that the global cities scholarship offers a narrow – ethnocentric and economistic – window into contemporary urbanization processes. Scholars pointing out that the global cities literature is ethnocentric argue that its understanding of global citydom rests on the experiences of a small group of mostly Western cities (e.g. Jennifer Robinson, "Global and world cities"). Finally, as the economism critique, the global-city discourse is said to follow the strategy of the synecdoche – it highlights only a part of the urban economy, i.e. finance and associated industries, thus obscuring other vital elements of their economies and societies (e.g. Doreen Massey, *World City*, p. 41; see also Michele Acuto, *Global Cities, Governance and Diplomacy*, p. 41).
- ⁵⁵ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
- ⁵⁶ Kristin Ljungkvist, *The Global City 2.0*, p. 19. See also Richard G. Smith, "The Ordinary City Trap".
- ⁵⁷ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City*, p. 9–10.
- ⁵⁸ E.g. John Friedman, "The World City Hypothesis".
- ⁵⁹ Richard G. Smith, "The Ordinary City Trap", p. 2297.
- ⁶⁰ E.g. John Friedman, "The World City Hypothesis".
- ⁶¹ E.g. Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture Volume I*, 2nd Edition with a New Preface (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 2, 410.
- ⁶² Neil Brenner & David Wachsmuth, "Territorial Competitiveness: Lineages, Practices, Ideologies", in Neil Brenner, *Critique of Urbanization: Selected Essays* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2017), 85–111; Richard G. Smith, "The Ordinary City Trap", p. 2296.
- ⁶³ Paul Krugman, "Competitiveness: A Dangerous Obsession", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1994, p. 31; Neil Brenner & David Wachsmuth, "Territorial Competitiveness", p. 99–104.
- ⁶⁴ Peter Taylor, "On City Cooperation and City Competition", in *International Handbook of Globalization and World Cities* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011).
- ⁶⁵ Eugene McCann, Ananya Roy and Kevin Ward, "Assembling/Worlding Cities", *Urban Geography* Vol. 34, No. 5 (2013), p. 581.
- ⁶⁶ John Hartley, Jason Potts, and Trent McDonald, "Creative City Index", *Cultural Science*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2012), p. 33; Eugene McCann, Ananya Roy and Kevin Ward, "Assembling/Worlding Cities", p. 582.
- ⁶⁷ Scott Leff and Brittany Petersen, *Beyond the Scorecard*, p. 3.
- ⁶⁸ Aikalainen, "Eurooppa jää jälkeen Aasiasta", 24 January 2014.
- ⁶⁹ *Japan Times*, "Can Tokyo move up to the top spot of the Global Power City Index?", September 17, 2013.
- ⁷⁰ *Tverskaya13*, "V klub mirovyh gorodov", 22 September 2011.
- ⁷¹ While it is not possible to fully explore this aspect in this article, I traced the life of a specific report, PwC's *Cities of Opportunity* in the Integrum database, which contains thousands of documents from the Russian press, TV and radio, documents produced by governmental and commercial organisations. This showed that the report had found its way to various contexts in the world of policymaking, and it was treated as a source of reliable information.
- ⁷² Harriet Bulkeley and Heike Schroeder, "Beyond state/non-state divides: Global cities and the governing of climate change", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (2012), pp. 743–766. See also Andrew E.G. Jonas and Sami Moisio, "City Regionalism as Geopolitical Processes: A New Framework for Analysis", *Progress in Human Geography*, DOI: 10.1177/0309132516679897.
- ⁷³ Dale Spender, *Man Made Language* (London: Pandora, 1987), p. 163.
- ⁷⁴ E.g. A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index and Emerging Cities Outlook 2012*.
- ⁷⁵ Cf. Peter Marcuse, "The City' as Perverse Metaphor", p. 248.
- ⁷⁶ E.g. PwC, *From Moscow to Sao Paulo: Emerging 7 Cities Report 2013*, p. 13.
- ⁷⁷ Dale Spender, *Man Made Language*; Margaret McLaren, *Feminism, Foucault and Embodied Subjectivity* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), p. 136.

- ⁷⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 200.
- ⁷⁹ Sum and Jessop, *Towards a Cultural Political Economy*, p. 309.
- ⁸⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*, p. 184.
- ⁸¹ PwC, *Explore the Data, Make it Your Own* (2014).
- ⁸² Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*, p. 220.
- ⁸³ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Hot Spots 2025: Benchmarking the Future Competitiveness of Cities*, Appendix 1.
- ⁸⁴ PwC, *Cities of Opportunity 2012. Definition and Source Document*, p. 11.
- ⁸⁵ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Hot spots 2025*, p. 2.
- ⁸⁶ See e.g. Habitat III, "The Transformative Power of Urbanization", available at <https://www2.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/?i=1>, retrieved 30 January 2017.
- ⁸⁷ PwC, *From Moscow to Sao Paulo: Emerging 7 Cities Report 2013*, p. 14.
- ⁸⁸ A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index and Emerging Cities Outlook 2014*, p. 13.
- ⁸⁹ A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index and Emerging Cities Outlook 2012*, p. 6. See also Leff & Brittany Petersen, *Beyond the Scorecard*.
- ⁹⁰ PwC, *Cities of Opportunity 2010*, p. 13.
- ⁹¹ A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index and Emerging Cities Outlook 2014*, p. 13.
- ⁹² Wendy Larner & Richard Le Heron, 'Global Benchmarking: Participating at a Distance in the Global Economy', in Wendy Larner and William Walters (eds) *Global Governmentality: New Perspectives on International Rule* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 215.
- ⁹³ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Hot Spots 2025*, p. 5.
- ⁹⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*, p. 181.
- ⁹⁵ A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index 2010*, p. 1.
- ⁹⁶ PwC, *Cities of Opportunities 2012*, p. 7.
- ⁹⁷ A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index 2010*, p. 5.
- ⁹⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Hot spots 2025*, p. 6.
- ⁹⁹ United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision* (the United Nations, 2014), p. 1.
- ¹⁰⁰ United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision*, p. 17.
- ¹⁰¹ Peter Marcuse, "The City' as Perverse Metaphor", p. 252.
- ¹⁰² E.g. Paul L. Knox, "Globalization and World City Formation", in S.G.E. Gravesteijn, S. van Griensven and M.C. de Smidt (eds.) *Timing Global Cities* (Netherlands Geographical Studies, 1998), p. 28; Frank Witlox, "The World According to GaWC", Mobilität 2013 Conference, Frankfurt am Main, 28 May 2013, available from: http://www.faz-forum.com/mobilitaet-2013/2013_FAZ_UND_HOLM_F_WITLOX.pdf, retrieved 10 April 2016.
- ¹⁰³ E.g. PwC, *Cities of Opportunity 2010*, p. 15.
- ¹⁰⁴ Knight Frank, *Global Cities: The 2015 Report*, p. 20.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁶ Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power", in James D. Faubion (ed.) *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol. 3* (New York: The New Press, 2000), p. 341.
- ¹⁰⁷ E.g. A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index and Emerging Cities Outlook 2014*, p. 13.
- ¹⁰⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Hot Spots 2025*, p. 22.
- ¹⁰⁹ E.g. Knight Frank, *Global Cities: The 2015 Report*, p. 8.
- ¹¹⁰ A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index and Emerging Cities Outlook 2012*, p. 9.
- ¹¹¹ PwC, *From Moscow to Sao Paulo*, p. 14-15.
- ¹¹² Knight Frank, *Global Cities: The 2015 Report*, p. 11.
- ¹¹³ A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index and Emerging Cities Outlook 2014*, p. 3.
- ¹¹⁴ PwC, *From Moscow to Sao Paulo*, p. 21.
- ¹¹⁵ A.T. Kearney, *Global Cities Index 2010*, p. 9.
- ¹¹⁶ E.g. Brenda S.A. Yeoh, "Global/Globalizing Cities", *Progress in Human Geography* Vol. 23, No. 4 (1999), p. 611; J.A. Mbembé and Sarah Nuttall, "Writing the World from an African Metropolis", *Public Culture* Vol. 16, No. 3 (2004). Cf. also Jamie Peck, "Cities beyond Compare?", *Urban Studies* Vol. 49, No. 1 (2015), pp. 160–182.
- ¹¹⁷ Mark Purcell, "Citizenship and the Right to the Global City: Reimagining the Capitalist World Order", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* Vol. 27, No. 3 (2006), 564–590.
- ¹¹⁸ The United Nations, *Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly 71/256. New Urban Agenda*, 23 December 2016.
- ¹¹⁹ E.g. Jennifer Robinson, *Ordinary Cities*; Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong (eds.) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2011).